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IDENTITY THEFT PASSPORT PROGRAM

The Identity Theft Passport Act, found at 11 *Del.C.* §854A, provides victims of identity theft with a way to substantiate the crime to creditors and law enforcement. If you have been the victim of an identity thief, you have a new way to fight back and reclaim your identity. The Attorney General and his Office are ready to help you with this free process.

Identity theft occurs when a criminal steals a person's confidential information such as Social Security Number, birth date, credit card numbers or bank account information. Criminals use stolen information to obtain false drivers' licenses, utility services, credit cards, loans, government benefits, merchandise, and more. Stolen identities are also used to defraud consumers, commit crimes and avoid arrest.

Now victims of identity theft can present their passports to law enforcement agencies to help prevent arrest for offenses committed by someone using stolen information, to creditors to aid in the investigation of fraudulent charges, and to consumer reporting agencies as official notice of disputed charges on credit reports.

To be eligible for a passport, you must file a report with the police agency that has jurisdiction over your residence. You can apply for a passport at the same time you file your report with the police. You can also apply for a passport through the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit but only if you have first reported the crime to the police. For an application, call Consumer Protection at 800-220-5424 or go to the Consumer Protection page of the Attorney General's website at www.state.de.us/attgen/.

The police will forward your application to Consumer Protection. If you apply through Consumer Protection, in addition to your application you will need to give us the police report number and name of the police agency that took the report and any documentation you have of the crime such as credit card statements showing unauthorized purchases.

The Consumer Protection Unit will log in your application and then send it to the Criminal Division for an evaluation and determination of whether the claim is legitimate and adequately substantiated. Under the law, this determination must be made before a passport may be issued. You will be notified when the determination has been made. If your application is approved, we will make an appointment for you to complete the passport process at the Attorney General's Office most convenient for you. At that time, a laminated card with your photo and a certificate will be issued. You will also receive a copy of the rules that include information about the use, expiration, and replacement of the passport.

For more information about Identity Theft Passports, call Consumer Protection at 800-220-5424.